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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

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VOL. 7 NO. 1
FIRST ISSUE OF
JANUARY 1977
Issue # 145

-A "MANHATTAN PROJECT" TO REBUILD RAIL PASSENGER SERVICE?

CARS & CONSISTS

*Amtrak "1977 Transcontinental Steam Excursion", train X-4449 (Sanford FL to Birmingham AL), Sanford, Jan 14: engine 4-8-4 #4449 ex-SP steam engine, Southern Rwy water tender 50; cars PNWC 76 "Columbia" NRHS-owned crew car, 1117 open-door baggage, 9542 "Silver Stream" dome coach, 6018, 6029, 6021, 6023, 6013, 8399, 9545 "Silver Vision" dome coach, 9310 dome observation.

*FLORIDIAN/AUTO-TRAIN, train 56, Sanford, Jan 2: engines L&N 1125, Amtrak 545; cars 8352, 1520, 2771 "Charlotte", 4448, dome 9473, 5472, 3365, 5019, 8086, 2836 "Missouri Valley", 1518, (Auto-Train section:) 597, 803, 902, 701, 602, 132 heater car, 62 2-deck auto carrier, two 3-deck carriers (nos.?), dome coach 462.

*JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY, train 51, Cincinnati Dec 23, 1976: engines C&O 4089, C&O 5895, Atk 409 (E9A), 428 (E9A); cars 1192, 1037, 1306, 2629 "Pacific Ridge", 5272, 5442, 5427, 6035 (engine trouble in W. Virginia, 8hrs 13mins late at Cincinnati; ran as separate section from the MOUNTAINEER.)

*LONE STAR, train 15, Marland OK, Dec 15, 1976: engines 520, 501; cars 1189, 9914, 9910, 3382, 8043, 2759 "Palm Summit", 2726 "Pine Mesa", 5015, 1183 (consist that hit tanker truck--see RTN, 1st Dec issue 1976, p.3).

*JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY, train 50, Alexandria VA Jan 9: engines C&O 6237, Atk 413 (E8A), 433 (E9A); cars 1199, 1029, 2400 "Snohomish River", 5416, 5415, 6073, 8366 "Robert Morris". Train 51, same: engine 546; cars 1001, 1168, 1068, 1066, 2242 "Homestead", 5671, 6067, 5670, 3962 (extra mail cars due to #50 & 51 being turned in Charlottesville Jan 7&8, backlogging Chicago mail in Washington).

*NIGHT OWL, train 67, Capital Beltway MD, Jan 8: engine 912 (GG-1); cars 1086, 2697, Amlounge 20211, Amcoaches 21838, 21038, 21095, power car 1291 (arrived encased in ice 45mins late, stranded sleeping car attendant on platform on departing).

*SUNSET LIMITED, train 2, Los Angeles Dec 28, 1976: engines 572, 559; cars 1088, 9927, 9941, 9949, 9920, 5236, 3395, 8041, 2716 "Pine Dale", 2352 "Regal Isle", 2501 "Blue Grove", 2602 "Pacific Beauty" (L.A.-NY car), dome 9250 "Silver Horizon", SP business car 117 "Tucson" El Paso-San Antonio, Pres. Reistrup reported aboard.

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 14, San Jose Dec 31, 1976: engines 569, 568, 571, 554 (2 removed at Oakland); cars 1062, 1501, 4860, 4859, 4869, 4500, 8103, 4530, 4545, 4460, 4865, 4535, 4851, dome 9372, 8075, 2723 "Pine King", 2611 "Pacific Forest", 2362 "Regal Creek", (deadheads:) 1400, 2212 "Indian Falls", 2505 "Blue Mott." Train 11, Seattle Jan 14: engines BN 6327 (SD40), Atk 376 (F), 345; cars 1045, 1503, 4500, 4850, 4542, 4510, 4867, 4541, dome 9372, 8034, 2723, 2713.

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 6, Denver Jan 4: engines 580, 557, 575, 628; cars 2202, 2264, 2615, 2620, 8042, 3334, 5014, 4825, 4421, 4820, 4817, 1422, 1004, 1076.

*MONTREALER, train 61, Meriden CT Dec 24, 1976: engines 432, 403, 405 (E8's); cars 1514, 3812, 4411, 6046, 5673, 5239, 6806, 5459, 3300, 8333, 2234, 2400, 2017, CN 1100 "Mount Edith Cavell" in "VIA CN" blue & yellow paint.

*CONNECTICUT YANKEE, train 143, Meriden CT Dec 25, 1976: engines 295, 322 (E8's), 497, 495 (E8's with head end power); Amfleet cars 20002, 21803, 21179, 21132, 20008, 21198, 21204, 21071, 21043, 20110.

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR: engine combinations observed on train 6 at Galesburg IL during embargo on SDP40F's: Dec 26, 1976: BN 5478 (U28B), Atk 413, 426 (E9A's), 470 (E9B). Dec 28: 700 (P30CH), 368, 353, 402 (E9A's). Dec 29: GN 3033 (GP-40, added at Galesburg), Atk 440, 426 (E9A's), 470 (E9B). Atk track inspection car 10,000 was on rear of train on Dec 29.

*BLACK HAWK, train 370, Rockford IL, Jan 12: engine 714 (P30CH); cars 21113, 21815, 21852, Amcafe 20006.

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STAFF: Editor: James Russell. Editor-at-Large: Paul Payton. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Los Angeles; Jack Ferry, Chicago; Kenneth Maylath, Baltimore; Peter Roehm, Boston.

ON THE COVER:

Our cover illustration is part of a reproduction, released by Amtrak, of a color painting of an F40PH locomotive pulling a string of new Amfleet cars. The painting, done by noted railroad artist Gil Reid, assistant art director of Kalmbach Publications, appears on Amtrak's 1977 calendar. Amtrak said that for the first time it will offer its calendar for sale to the public at a cost of $3.50 each plus local sales tax. The ordering address is: Amtrak Calendar, c/o Western Folder, 850 W. Fullerton Ave., Addison IL 60101. The calendar is printed on a single 24x33 inch sheet, and the painting itself is 16x23 inches in size.

ADAMS AND THE PEANUT TRAIN HAVE ARRIVED

The highly-publicized "Peanut Special" train from Plains GA to Washington arrived on time in that city--actually 4 minutes late, at 7:04am--on Jan 20, bringing passengers to the inauguration of President-elect Jimmy Carter. Consist of the train was: SDP40F engines 582, 595, 588; cars 5404, 5475, 5442, 2252 "Star Leaf", 2263 "Placid Lake", 2203 "Silver Swan", 2638 "Pacific Trail", piano bar-lounge 3409, twin unit diner 8800-8801, sleeper lounge 3205 "Gulf Stream", 2201 "Silver Quail", 2250 Star Bay", 2215 "Indian Maid", 2211 "Indian Drum", 2214 "Indian Lake", 2626 "Pacific Plateau", and 2618 "Pacific Lodge." Cars were moved from New Orleans at 1pm Jan 18 where the consist was recorded, to Plains for start of the special run. In addition cars 2242 "Homestead" and dome lounge 9350 (ex-SUPER CHIEF) were kept at New Orleans as backup equipment for the train. A reported 386 passengers rode the train from Plains, and it fell an hour behind schedule at Fitzgerald GA but regained its schedule by Florence SC after some 80mph running.

About 6 hours after the noon-time inauguration of Carter, the Senate completed confirmation of Brock Adams as the new Secretary of Transportation. The National Association of RR Passengers revealed in its Dec newsletter that Adams's legislative assistant is Woodruff Price, at one time executive director of NARP, and widely respected in the railroad field for his Transportation Subcommittee work with Adams.

Late news flash: the "Peanut Special" arrived back in Plains at 1pm Jan 22, with travelers complaining about tourist treatment in Washington, but apparently no complaints about the train.

THE FLORIDIAN DERAILS AGAIN

The southbound FLORIDIAN derailed at 4:20am Jan 16 about 15 miles north of Birmingham AL. Altho cars were flung about like matchsticks, there were apparently no serious injuries among the 205 passengers. Two persons were hospitalized, for complaints of chest pains and hypertension, and 147 others were examined and released. Ten cars of the 20-odd went off the tracks, with loss of track adhesion reportedly occuring 3 coaches behind the two engines. Four cars, including two domes, tumbled down a steep embankment. The Auto-Train section of the train did not derail. Noted Chicago railfan Roy Arpan was riding in one of the domes at the time. He told a reporter that "It was like walking inside a funhouse, because the walls were all at an angle." Passengers did not panic in the wreck.

Amtrak announced Jan 18 that it was indefinitely suspending service on the FLORIDIAN route, among 8 routes on which it was halting service because of severe equipment shortages brought on primarily by the record cold weather across the nation (see report starting on p.10). One report indicated that Auto-Train would continue its service on the route with its own equipment, with one weekly roundtrip.

Amtrak's eastbound SHENANDOAH derailed at Independence, WV in mid-afternoon of Dec 31, 1976. The derailment was minor, with the locomotive and first car of the 2-car train leaving the rails. The train was re-railed after a 3-hour delay and continued its journey with 35 passengers aboard. The accident, 10 miles east of Grafton WV came on the train's 2-month anniversary of revenue operation.

(continued on page 8)

Rail Canada

A "CANTRAK" IS COMING THIS YEAR

A Crown corporation similar to Amtrak, which will take over operation of Canadian passenger trains will be established before the end of 1977, it was announced Jan 13 by Transport Minister Otto Lang.

The corporation will operate in a manner similar to that of Amtrak in the U.S., owning its own equipment and paying the railways to operate its trains, with the government covering operating deficits and providing incentives to the railways for good service. Lang said that some poorly patronized services would be cut out, and that some sleeping car service on some routes might be cut. Lang indicated, in a televised report, that an attempt will be made to increase passenger train speeds, altho this would require some time and some track improvements. He said that between 3 and 10 sets of new, fast passenger train equipment are being ordered. The integration of CP Rail and CN service by means of the joint timetable published last October was the first step in merging the services of the two main railways, Lang pointed out. The corporation is expected to be operating the trains some time before the end of this year.

The possibility of the formation of such an organization was first mentioned by former Transport Minister Jean Marchand in Jun 1974 when a campaign promise to organize a Canadian Passenger Transportation Corp. after the national elections of that summer was made. After the election the idea was placed on a back burner (see RTN, Second June issue, 1974). (Copies of issue still available at 30¢.)

ESQUIMALT AND NANAIMO Railway must resume complete passenger and freight operations by Dec 23, 1977, ordered the federal government this month. CP Rail, operator of the line must upgrade the track and build two trestles as well.

THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT has introduced a bill in Parliament in Ottawa to remove control of Air Canada from Canadian National Railways. A new Crown corporation would be formed to manage the airline, and would be directly responsible to the federal government.

AN EDITORIAL APPEARING in Transit Canada magazine (Nov-Dec) blasts the federal government's transportation policies that downplay rail service: "The Ministry of Transport, firmly anchored in the glamorous air age of the 1950s when planes were a novelty and fuel was cheap, ignores the long-range environmental and economic factors which have persuaded western European countries, Japan, Australia and even the United States, which has Amtrak, that the passenger train is the best solution for intercity public transport."

CANADIAN NEWS BRIEFS: Budget problems have halted extensions of the Montreal Metro subway slated to cost $1.3 billion, and may affect a contract for 423 subway cars now being built by Bombardier-MLW..... The experimental hydrofoil service operated for 6 weeks in 1976 between Victoria and Seattle will probably not be resumed this year because of high capital costs..... That recent study on railway electrification suggests that some 8000 miles of mainline could be electrified over a 25-year period for up to $1.2 billion, saving 100 million gallons of fuel yearly; a 500-mile pilot project was recommended for either CP or CN in the Prairie or Rocky Mountain regions..... Some unusual news from Ontario transit circles is that Guelph made a modest profit on its transit system the first 5 months of 1976, with revenues $2558 higher than costs, with substantial charter revenues doing the trick..... Architects Marani, Rounthwaite and Dick, involved in rebuilding Toronto's Union Station, say they are being careful to retain the grandeur of the famous terminal, including retention of the impressive "Great Hall" concourse..... Several Halifax, N.S. political figures have suggested a return to trolley coaches on several of the city's hilly transit routes..

A "MANHATTAN PROJECT" TO REBUILD RAIL PASSENGER SERVICE?

We have arrived at an important junction point in the history of our nation. Not only are we beginning a new year and a new political administration, but also we are starting the third century of our country's existence. The old year, the elections, the Bicentennial celebrations are behind us, and now it's time to get down to business and look clearly at where we are going with respect to our survival into the twenty-first century.

Someone said recently that lawmakers can't seem to think more than a year into the future. If we are to survive the decades ahead we are going to have to learn to plan further into the future. The problem under discussion here is that simple but very basic and all-pervasive question of Energy--and the related problems of transportation.

The "average man" doesn't have all the necessary information or even the time to draw a realistic conclusion about the directions we should be taking vis-a-vis energy usage. And yet our lawmakers require the public's input and support to help steer them toward reasonable policies. With this in mind, it is possible to sit down and ask some logical questions about our future, and demand that our leaders seek some reasonable answers.

Ever since the energy crisis of 1973 we have been treating the problem the way Mark Twain said people related to the weather--everybody's been talking about it while continuing to use fuel at an ever-increasing rate. Exactly how much petroleum is left in the world? No one knows for certain, but 50 or 60 years' worth is a commonly-mentioned figure. But as with all problems the natural inclination is to feel that the matter is not as bad as it appears; that new discoveries (such as the recent one in Mexico) will continue to be made, enabling the world's supply to last indefinitely. A natural inclination is to fail to realize that new discoveries will only tend to offset unplanned-for losses, such as underestimates of existing supplies, spills and other losses. It is not realistic to assume that experts' estimates of a few decades' worth are wrong. The chairman of Atlantic Richfield Co. has been quoted as saying: "We're moving toward an almost certain energy famine."

What will life in the United States be like as fuel gets scarcer? We've had a taste of the future already, and it won't be hard to guess what may be ahead. The gasoline shortage of 1973-74 is still remembered. We were unprepared for the shortage of heating fuel in much of the nation this month as record-low temperatures were recorded. The economy is now suffering because of factory closures in the present shortage, and individuals are physically suffering. One can assume that problems such as these will become more frequent and more debilitating unless we are prepared for an orderly phase-in of alternate means of energy production.

Fuel for space-heating and for industry creates an enormous problem, but at least one is dealing with stationary energy sources, and these can be powered from a variety of alternate means. In transportation there is an added problem--many vehicles must carry their power plant and fuel with them, and thus the kinds of energy sources they can use are limited. Transportation uses one-fourth of all petroleum in the U.S., and the automobile accounts for most of this. We can only work on the assumption that the internal combustion engine will have to be phased

out of existence; and given the time period in question, it would seem reasonable to start at once to make plans for that phasing-out. The corollary of this, of course, is that we must plan now to phase in other types of motive power. The alternatives are limited in the case of autos and other highway vehicles, and in the case of aircraft. It happens that rail vehicles are the most flexible in this respect, requiring the least amount of alteration to continue operation under the "energy-famine" conditions of the future.

Let us then discuss each major type of transportation vehicle and try to guess what the impact on our transportation system will be when petroleum is phased out as an energy source.

ALTERNATIVE POWER SOURCES FOR VARIOUS VEHICLES

VEHICLE	ELECTRIC POWER SOURCE: BATTERY	HYDRO-ELEC.	NUCLEAR	SOLAR	STEAM
Aircraft	no	no	no	no	no
Automobile	yes	no	no	no	yes*
Bus	yes	no	no	no	yes*
Train	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Trolley-bus	yes	yes	yes	yes	--
Truck, heavy	no	no	no	no	yes*
Truck, light	yes	no	no	no	yes*

*Requires some petroleum usage to fire steam boiler

In preparing the above table, we have considered the two most viable alternatives to gasoline engines: electric and steam engines. With electric motors, the generating source is indicated--either a source carried in the vehicle (battery) or a remote generating station (run by water power, nuclear power, or solar power; other power sources are possible, such as wind power). In the case of battery use, the battery must be charged up initially from some stationary source, of course.

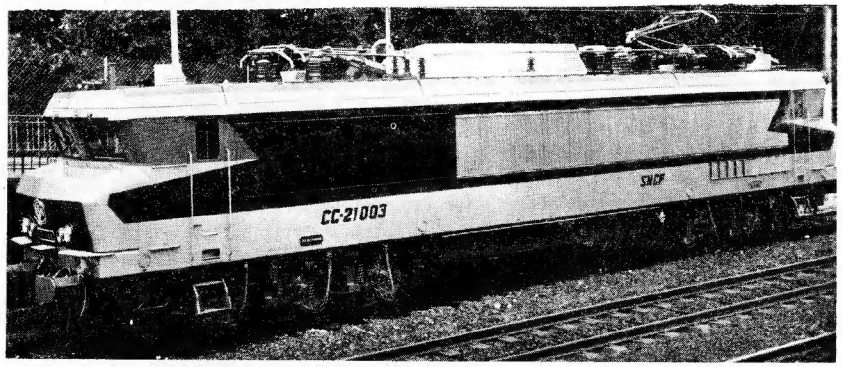
The table suggests that aircraft are in deep trouble. Likewise, highway trucks will find it difficult to locate energy sources. The train and the trolley-bus are fortunate because they are the only vehicles that can use external power sources with energy transmitted to them via power lines.

What visions of the future do these considerations suggest? They suggest that long-distance travel now done by airplane will become increasingly expensive and difficult to arrange. It seems likely that dwindling fuel supplies will be reserved for military and emergency aircraft use, and that regular civilian air passengers would have to be shunted to other modes, most likely fast inter-city trains. Highway trucks would have to be phased out, and their cargos returned to the rails. This of course would increase highway safety in an era when autos are smaller and lighter in weight (see also "Road danger is rising as more trucks ignore U.S. speed limit of 55", Wall Street Journal, Dec 31, 1976). Light delivery trucks in cities and on relatively short routes could be battery-powered, as automobiles probably will be. It seems unlikely that the automobile will disappear in significant numbers from our roads, but in a switch to battery power the auto industry would be maintained and the economy thus unthreatened, with the necessity of replacing present cars with new ones powered by electricity or possibly steam.

The major area of growth would seem to be in the rails. Not only would freight carrying increase significantly, but passenger traffic of greatly increased proportions would have to be planned for. Road vehicle use would remain practical, but would probably drop off because of the requirement of periodic stops to change batteries. The nuisance and expense of this on long trips would drive more long distance travelers to the rails, or to auto-ferrying trains. And of course the former air traveler would be shifting to the rails also.

Automobile driving would become more pleasant because of the disappearance of the noisy and polluting internal combustion engine, and because of the lack of large trucks intermixing with small cars on the highways. As a result, one might predict that short and intermediate distance trips would continue to be made largely by automobile, altho the cost of auto operation could be significantly higher than at present and thus would tend to discourage auto commuters.

Two major changes will be required of the railroads, tho these changes from a technical standpoint are much simpler than the changes required of the other modes. The first is electrification of existing non-electrified lines and the acquisition of electric-powered equipment to operate on them. The second is a large-scale expansion of our passenger train network both in number of routes and in level of service.



POWER FOR THE FUTURE: All railroad lines will have to be electrified before petroleum becomes unavailable. This French electric locomotive will be tested by Amtrak in the Northeast Corridor soon. Amtrak photo.

The electrification of railroad lines probably would be most readily accomplished under a plan by which the Federal government took over ownership of the rights-of-way, as it now owns the Interstate Highway system, and charged the individual carriers for use of the rails. This plan would also simplify the expansion of the passenger train system, which now operates on tracks begrudgingly supplied by the individual railroads.

The existing plan for U.S. passenger train service in the next half-decade is far too meager as a beginning for the changes that must be made in our overall transportation system in order to meet the coming petroleum famine. Amtrak's five-year plan, recently published, is simply an extrapolation of the snail's pace of progress that has been made in the past five years under a Department of Transportation that has been consistently planning for an orderly phaseout of train service. Amtrak's five-year plan makes it clear that the corporation could, if supported by the public and by Congress, follow a more expansive plan that would lead to something like the future we have been predicting here. Let us quote from Amtrak's five-year plan: "There is concern that the capital investments proposed for the next five years are inadequate. Predicted energy costs over the next ten years can be cited that would support a 'Manhattan Project' approach to passenger train service redevelopment. It can even be argued that present operating costs are so leveraged against achievable revenues that incremental improvements will not be sufficient--that quantum improvements on an entirely new scale are necessary. There is much to be said for this longer view, but a realistic assessment must be that the country as a whole has not yet expressed a desire to start building entirely new Tokaido lines."

Now is the time for the nation to stop and consider whether it might not be in

our best interests to start investing in rail redevelopment on the much larger scale alluded to in the Amtrak report. The original Manhattan Project was a crash program to develop a technology believed to be necessary for the country's survival. We should ask ourselves whether the nation's survival in the coming energy famine does not require an equally rapid regrowth of the transportation mode we will have to rely upon as the backbone of the country's mobility in the coming decades.

These times require people of vision. We should not regard our future as one of retrenchment and hunkering down under survival conditions of living. Our earth and our universe are vibrating with energy--good, clean energy waiting to be tapped. We should be devoting more research to learning how to use the vast resources of our limitless environment for the betterment of mankind, instead of mucking around in the oil-and-fire technology inherited from prehistoric times. And we should be looking forward along the bright, shining rails that will carry our technology into a better tomorrow.

DERAILMENTS (continued from page 3)

A passenger aboard the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR that derailed Dec 16, 1976 near Omaha died Dec 28 in an Omaha hospital where he had been since the wreck. Greg Gee, 27, of Farragut IA had undergone surgery for internal injuries and succumbed of complications following surgery. He was the only Amtrak derailment fatality of 1976. One person died as a result of a derailment in 1973, and 11 in the wreck of the former CITY OF NEW ORLEANS in 1971.

The southbound Amfleet COLONIAL broke down in the mile-long tunnel after leaving the Washington station on Dec 29. After a 10-minute delay an engine coupled to the rear of the train and pulled it out of the tunnel. Passengers in the rear car suffered diesel fume inhalation, and a nurse and other volunteers aboard passed out paper towels while the passengers were moved to a forward car. The train proceeded to Williamsburg about one hour behind schedule.

Both COAST STARLIGHTS were delayed Jan 4 when an SP freight hit a dirt slide at milepost 295.7 about 26 miles south of Dunsmuir CA just after midnight. The lead freight engine, SP 8889, derailed and went on its side into the Sacramento River, spilling diesel fuel into the water. A second engine and 6 cars derailed, 3 Of them in a tunnel. While workers cleared the mess, the southbound STARLIGHT turned at Dunsmuir, and the northbound likewise at Redding, with passengers bused between. Passengers from the northbound train arrived Seattle about 12 hours late, and passengers going south were also delayed. About 200-300 people were aboard each train. The engineer and brakeman of the freight were treated for minor injuries.

The northbound STARLIGHT on Dec 17, 1976 struck and killed an 11-year-old boy who was walking along the tracks near Oxnard CA. The train was delayed 1hr 20mins.

AMTRAK RUNS AN AMFLEET COAST STARLIGHT

A first-time event occurred on Jan 8 when Amtrak ran an all-Amfleet COAST STARLIGHT from Oakland to Los Angeles, as the first section of the train, on the regular STARLIGHT schedule. The regular southbound train was expected late into Oakland because of the BN locomotive embargo, and a sizeable tour group heading for the Super Bowl football game in Southern California, the group sponsored by La Veer's Travel of Oakland, was to board at Oakland. Running an Amfleet train would also give Amtrak an opportunity to move some of the excess Amfleet cars out of the Northwest, cars no longer needed because of the end of Seattle Kingdome football season. It would incidentally give Amtrak a chance to evaluate their performance on a route which Amtrak has been considering for their introduction, as a second daylight Oakland-L.A. train.

RTN's Peter Bretz rode the train from Santa Barbara to L.A. and reports that it was on time all the way. Consist of the first section was: engines 566 (SDP40F),

214 (F40PH); cars 1352 (Ambag), 21148, 20016, 21150, 20012, 21147, 20015, 21149. The 200-- series cars are Amcafes. The two front Amcafes were each operated by one man and one woman, with one man in the third. There were no coach attendants on the train. Two supervisors were aboard, and Amtrak Western Region VP Neal Owen was taking in the proceedings.

Pete says the cars performed admirably, but the lack of window shades bothered him. Doors were set so about two opened at station stops, not all at once as in regular corridor operation. Reportedly because of the lack of coach attendants, two men got left behind at San Luis Obispo when they were off the train attempting to locate some Dos Equis beer. However, they grabbed a taxi to the nearest airport (Santa Maria?) and chartered a Coastal Airlines plane which at a fare of $99.40 took them to Oxnard where they could rejoin the train. Reportedly they remarked that they would bill Amtrak for the extra costs they incurred.

The train was about 3/4 full at all times, Pete reports. One young woman was making her first train trip, and didn't realize the unusual nature of the run that day, or that all railroad cars were not like the Amfleet cars she was riding. The cars had been deadheaded from Portland to Oakland a day ahead in anticipation of the special run.

COLEMAN GOES DOWN SWINGING AT AMTRAK

William Coleman ended his tenure as Transportation Secretary at noon on Jan 20, and in his last days in office he managed to direct a good deal more of his anti-Amtrak attitudes to the media--and in one case Amtrak openly fought back.

Coleman said in Aviation Daily (Jan 6 issue) that it is the "most ridiculous thing in the world" to subsidize a Boston-Chicago train ride because it takes 18 hours "when you can fly there in 1 hour, 15 minutes." At this point Amtrak apparently could endure his slings and arrows no longer, and shot back a letter to him on Jan 10 (also distributed to the media) in which Public Affairs VP Edwin Edel reminded Coleman that he himself had selected the Boston-Chicago (LAKE SHORE LIMITED--RTN's "Train of the Year" for 1976; see last issue) route that Amtrak was required to operate. What's more, Edel pointed out, the train is "overwhelmingly used by short-distance passengers", with only about 3% of the 303,828 riders last year traveling from end point to end point, a ridership which Coleman's airplane obviously couldn't serve.

Amtrak's Edel went on: "I find your statements purporting to support short-distance and 'corridor' train service also open to question. The Northeast Corridor improvement project was authorized last February. Your Department has failed during all this time to get the program going. As a result, an entire work season has been lost. The train-riding public also lost a year of improved service, and the taxpaying public, thru higher costs and inflation, will lose millions in additional costs for the work postponed. Frankly, I really don't know why you have impeded Amtrak's progress during your term in office. I do know that misuse of facts doesn't contribute one scintilla to solving the nation's transportation problems."

Coleman likened the passenger train to an outhouse: "To me, the passenger train, once you get out of the Northeast corridor and a few other places, is very much like the outhouse. At one time it made a lot of sense but once you got plumbing there is no doubt you put out of business people who made outhouses."

Coleman also told the New York Times (Dec 27, 1976) that "it is doubtful that, outside those few densely populated metropolitan corridors, rail service will ever be anything more than a highly specialized service appealing to a minority clientele." The Wall Street Journal echoed his anti-passenger train remarks in an editorial the following day.

Just before leaving office, Coleman issued a 412-page report the major thrust of which seemed to be to call for cutting off large subsidies to Amtrak (see Wall Street Journal, Jan 17).

For more anti-Amtrak comments from Greyhound, see Mixed Train of Thoughts section.

Old Man Winter

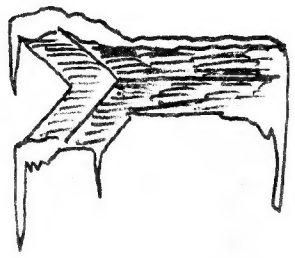
Exactly 25 years ago, on Jan 13, 1952, the westbound CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO, the direct predecessor of the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, became trapped in heavy snow in California's High Sierra. This January there was little snow to impede the train's progress, but elsewhere in the U.S. record low temperatures played havoc with transportation and a dispute over the safety of Amtrak's main long-distance locomotive, the GM-built SDP40F, combined to create the most serious disruption of Amtrak systemwide schedules in the history of the corporation, and for the first time under Amtrak actual suspension of service on a number of routes--certainly the most operational problems Amtrak has faced since the difficult winter of 1973-4 (detailed in RTN, 1st Jan issue 1974--issue still available at 30¢).

Burlington Northern's embargo on SDP40F engines was reportedly the result of an on-site investigation following the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR derailment near Papillion NE on Dec 16. The train, powered by engines 620 and 586, derailed on a curve, and BN investigators concluded by track examination and by inspection of the engines at Lincoln afterwards that high lateral forces in the locomotive trucks caused the forward truck on the rear unit to derail first; as other cars were derailed, track damage occurred sufficient to remove a rail from alignment and send the rear cars down an embankment. BN officials reportedly know of at least ten previous Amtrak derailments (two on BN) in which the second diesel or first car was the first to derail because of gauge-widening thought to be caused by the SDP40F locomotives.

BN announced the embargo (actually a 40mph speed restriction which made use of the engines impractical) on Dec 18 and assigned a pool of freight diesels geared for 77mph and its own heater cars to Amtrak service. Thus began a long period of severe schedule disruption of trains using BN tracks--ironically on the railroad which had given Amtrak the biggest schedule speedups last Oct 31. Amtrak had to rush in other locomotives to replace the SDPs on BN lines, and began to face a severe shortage of locomotives. It even leased Union Pacific E units and Southern Railway E's and FP7's for some of its long-distance runs out of Chicago (some of the SR engines, taken off the defunct PIEDMONT, promptly conked out pulling the JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY thru Virginia, setting train 50 16 hours late at Washington; the Chessie System had also set a low speed limit on SDPs, and Southern Pacific required them to slow to 50mph on curves).

At this point the weather intervened as a major disrupter of Amtrak schedules. Monday morning newspapers on Jan 10 said it had hit 60 below zero (all temperatures Farenheit) in Rice Lake, WI and -43° at Hibbing MN. But the worst was yet to come. On Jan 16 Chicago had its lowest temperature of this century--an average of -13°. It was the coldest day since Feb 9, 1899, when 14 below was reached. The record-breaking cold wave which sept thru the Midwest and East in mid-month may have brought on Amtrak's "darkest hour." Track switches froze solid, water pipes in conventional railroad cars burst, diesel fuel turned to jelly, and as the grip of sub-zero weather closed in on Chicago, up to 17 daily runs were annulled at the height of the Jan 16-17 freeze. Those trains continuing to run were often limited to 40mph as railroad operating departments imposed lower speed limits to prevent damage to equipment and roadbeds. Only electrically-heated Amfleet trains and Turbos did well, as winds from Lake Michigan created wind-chill factors down to -62°. In the Santa Fe coach yards in Chicago a water main burst, creating a 6-inch layer of ice over the tracks, which literally froze the Amtrak cars in solid. In spite of this, the SOUTHWEST LIMITED was reportedly maintaining the best schedule record, on one day being the only Chicago train to arrive on time (actually 18 mins early). Observers put some of the blame for frozen and damaged cars on Chicago

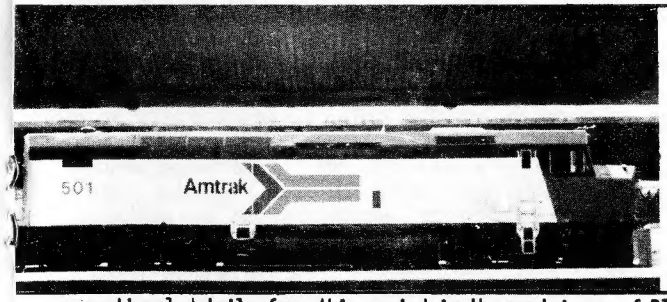
yard operations. But the Chicago Sun-Times described the problem this way: "Skilled hands turn all thumbs at zero degrees, and bulky clothing slows everybody down. Machinery breaks down and communications are retarded."



Nation-vide press coverage was given to Amtrak's widespread cancellation of service in the Midwest. At the height of the cold wave, which happened to coincide with the Jan 16 FLORIDIAN derailment near Birmingham, Amtrak announced that it was indefinitely suspending service on the following trains: FLORIDIAN, SHENANDOAH, BLACK HAWK, MOUNTAINEER, ILLINI, BLUE WATER LIMITED, southbound ABRAHAM LINCOLN, northbound STATE HOUSE, and the INTER-AMERICAN. Amfleet cars were being placed temporarily on the PANAMA LIMITED and the JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY, which meant no sleeper service on those trains. Illinois Governor James Thompson sent a delegate to Amtrak in Washington to complain about the train suspensions, three of which are subsidized by that state: the BLACK HAWK, ILLINI, and STATE HOUSE. Senator Warren Magnuson of Washington, chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, said he was looking into the whole problem of the Burlington's restrictions on Amtrak locomotives.

The BN began accepting the SDPs again by mid-January, with the same 50mph speed limit on curves which the SP demanded, and on Jan 20 Amtrak announced formation of a four-party "precautionary" test program to investigation the "unknown interaction" between SDP40F locomotive and track on curves of 2° or greater. Led by Dr. William Harris, an Association of American Railroads engineer, the group included representatives of the AAR, Amtrak, the Federal Railroad Administration, and General Motors. The National Transportation Safety Board was also asked to participate. In the meantime, Amtrak said it would issue new timetables as soon as possible to reflect the lower speeds its trains are now making. The route suspensions are to be in effect until the passenger car yards are back to normal, the weather improved, and enough equipment available to run the trains normally.

As the month moved on, Western train schedules were becoming normalized. The SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR apparently suffered the most from these winter problems, with a total of three westbound annullments and one eastbound, and with the westbound train turned once at Sparks NV and passengers bused on (much to their displeasure, as newspaper headlines pointed out). We expect to publish many more operational details from this period in the next issue of RTN.



ENGINE IN QUESTION: The SDP40F-type locomotive is being studied for possible operational problems. Engine 501 was brand new when photographed by Paul Rayton on the SUPER CHIEF.

On Jan 15 Amtrak ran a special train of locomotives from Chicago to New Orleans. The consist was: E units 417, 472, 426, 419, 470, 440, 457, and ICG caboose. The engines were moved south to be thawed and worked on in a warmer climate. Amtrak was expected later to move about 25 bad-ordered cars to New Olreans or Miami for similar work.

P.S.: in January so far the average daily temperature in Chicago was only 8°. Miami had snow for the first time in recorded history on Jan 19 as the cold air moved further southward.

THIRTY-SIX MILES OF TROUBLE

Winter on the B&M Eastern Route by Peter Roehm

Some years back a book was published titled "36 Miles of Trouble", which dealt with the trying times of the now-deceased West River Railroad in Vermont. That troubling 36 miles can now be transposed to the MBTA/B&M's Boston-Rockport line and the experiences on it over the weekend of January 7-11 as heavy snows, rain, sleet, ice and cold winds swept across eastern New England with nothing but headaches for the commuter rail systems and particularly the Eastern Route.

By daybreak Friday Jan 7 the snow had begun to build up along most of the route except for Rockport and Gloucester, where a snow-rain combination kept the depth down a bit until a wind shift later in the afternoon guaranteed snow and foretold of problems. During the day all outbound trains were running close to schedule to both Ipswich and Rockport but as the rush hour arrived the idea of a schedule looked less than hopeful. Train 255 from Boston at 5:32pm for Ipswich became stuck at North Beverly and unable to move either direction. Train 557 for Rockport from Boston at 6pm was running very late. Both of these situations caused Ipswich-destined #261 to sit at Beverly and upon our arrival (train 563) we too had to hold, since #557 had not yet accounted for itself at Wilson's (Gloucester Draw) some 2½ hours overdue. Trouble brewing.

I had caught train 563 (8pm departure from Boston) after having spent a half hour at South Station answering ConRail commuter phones and discussing the day's major news item with RTN reader Rick Hurst: the planned termination of all ConRail Boston commuter service by Mar 13 unless a new subsidy arrangement could be worked out with the MBTA. Train 563 slowly plied its way to Beverly via the intermediate stops of Lynn, Swampscott, and Salem, and tied up behind the Ipswich #261 at the Depot, now a very excellent restaurant and saloon. Passengers from #261 were warming both exteriors and interiors therein until clearance for the run could be received. At 9:30 it was received, and #261 proceeded north. A short time later we received word that #557 had cleared Wilson's and we were free to head out on the branch to Rockport.

Snow had piled up considerably, and we now faced one of two choices: annul ourselves at Beverly or return to Boston for a locomotive. Engineer Paul Sullivan and Conductor Ronnie Ring were determined to reach Rockport, so after a couple of running starts we were headed inbound to North Station bucking the drifts along invisible tracks as a ship knifes the rough seas in a gale. High greens greeted us all along until Everett Junction where an inattentive towerman at Mystic (North Station) hit us with a red. After waiting 20 minutes, we were lined up for the station and headed in, arriving at 11:55--four hours after we had originally left. Train 563 was no more; we would become #571.

I left the warmth of the train to hurry quickly to Mac's for coffee and munchies, when the station announcer called the Rockport train, which was then greeted by a loud cheer and a subsequent stampede of humanity that had been gathering since the trains of 9:00, 10:00, and 11:00 had been cancelled. I did an immediate about face and reclaimed my seat, promptly deciding that an empty stomach would have to be lived with for an indefinite period of time.

A 1200-hp switcher was attached, and a half hour into Saturday this happy lot of passengers were setting out for the journey north. Lynn O.K., then Swampscott and we sit. Does not look good. Then we limp into Salem and the switcher dies. Two Budd cars, snow, cold and all were just too much for this engine to cope with. It is now 1:30am or later, and I have been trying to get home for over 5½ hours. So, now what?

At 2:30 GP-9 #1736 and plow #W3737 come in behind us. Big deal! What can it do back there when what we need is the snow removed from in front? For two hours we

sit while an extra man in Salem tower who refuses to make any decisions is finally persuaded that the only way we will make it is to have the Geep and plow coupled on front. At 4:30 we become Plow, Geep, and two Budds and move on toward Beverly, detraining tired but thankful passengers. Then on to the branch toward the rising sun. The storm had ended, but the high winds had not, as we inched our way along stopping at occasional grade crossings that had been plowed, to be sure that we did not derail our plow on the ice piles. At one point our plow picked up a downed tree branch of solid thickness and this took a while to extricate. For maximum visibility I positioned myself on the right front side of the first Budd and watched as the drifts, some as large as eight feet, went crumbling before our onslaught.

Toward the downside of 5am our train was automatically annulled and we became Extra 1736. Passengers for the most part slept and just accepted the whole affair as something beyond the control of the B&M or anyone else and thus did not get excited or arrogant; it was definitely a "c'est la vie" atmosphere even among the crew on the Budds; the Geep and plow boys had to work. As we pass Manchester, dropping a few very weary riders, the sky begins to brighten to the east and dawn is well entrenched as we arrive in Gloucester at 6:15am to detrain a good dozen-plus and pick up a few early birds waiting in vain for a usually scheduled 6am departure from Rockport which will be cancelled very shortly, and we take them with us to keep them warm. The normally 10-minute run takes 45 minutes as we arrive in Rockport and take a siding as two Budds are off the track on the station approach (they would remain that way until late Monday). Finally I have made it to Rockport--eleven hours after I left North Station. Thirty-six miles of trouble in 11 hours, or three miles an hour--should have walked!

The Rockport yard remained a shambles all weekend and into the following week. With two Budds grounded, the one sitting at the station was left lit and warm and became a waiting room for passengers waiting for trains on a catch-as-catch-can basis; the trains would receive and discharge passengers at the freight house area, a good 5-minute walk from the station platform. Following the arrival of our plow train, the engineer's time ran out and another crew was not sent out until the afternoon; thus the branch was single-track most of Saturday. The first train out was a late 7:30am departure, using our two Budds which seemed to be the only ones of a dozen on hand that could be used. Sunday night I would go to board a 7pm departure using cars from a 6:47 arrival and since it did not show until 8:45, the 7pm was annulled pending the arrival of one at 8:47 which left as a very late 9pm with three cars, one of which worked well and another so-so and the third not at all.

Monday dawned to more snow falling thickly and turning to heavy rain. All outbound Rockport runs were cancelled after #511 to Manchester was made immobile at Montserrat (first station on the branch from Beverly) at 9am or thereabouts. Inbound trains continued as long as equipment allowed. Streets, tracks and all were flooding as snow-packed drains refused to allow the water to go underground, and thoughts were entertained that Rockport would be cut off by the Salem tunnel or low points in Manchester station. A train was finally called for 3:30pm and ran two jam-packed cars, as few were taking chances on later trains. As it was being called I was entertaining an idea of a charter bus, but then reports came in that both highways (Routes 128 and 127) were closed on the outer North Shore. Arrived home at 5:30pm, and some trains did run after that.

Tuesday found the snow and rain of Monday frozen into ice. Trains ran but slowly. Commuters who usually drive abandoned their useless cars for the train and complained why no seats or why was it taking so long. What one felt like telling them

is X-rated. I returned on a late 10pm departure from Boston that was fueled with all aboard to find sitting in Rockport ConRail U33B #2958, with two B&M flats, CV caboose plow 4234, and B&M caboose C26. This U-boat is the largest power ever on the Gloucester Branch and a very rare happening.

More storms were due, but the B&M was finally dug out and the commuters were back into their routines. Despite Old Man Winter and fast-deteriorating equipment, the crews took the credit for getting the trains thru one way or another.

(P.S.: The Boston-Bedford run was cancelled indefinitely due to weather.)

Urban-Suburban Transit

CONRAIL POSTED NOTICES of discontinuance Jan 7 for five commuter lines out of Boston's South Station, to be effective Mar 13. The ex-New Haven lines, the entire ConRail commuter operation in the Boston area, carry 6000 commuters daily from Boston to Framingham, Stoughton, Needham, Franklin and Providence, R.I. ConRail said it was required by law to take the step because the MBTA had not presented an offer of subsidy to the railroad, which took over the lines last Apr 1. The Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973 provided that ConRail operate the lines un til Sep 27, 1976, after which time local authorities would have to make an offer of subsidy in order to continue operations. ConRail said the MBTA did not make an offer, and "in spite of extensive and continuing discussions" the MBTA has come forward with no funds and has owed ConRail $2.1 million for the period of Sep 28-Dec 31, 1976. ConRail said it is "willing and eager" to continue discussions, but had to comply with the law and announce the pending discontinuance of service. Congressperson Margaret M. Heckler made a formal complaint to ConRail concerning the matter. ConRail wants a subsidy of $8.74 million for the year 1977. The MBTA has been paying $380,000 per month to ConRail and is eligible for a federal reimbursement for subsidy costs beyond that amount. An MBTA spokesman said it was discussing a "recent poor performance record" in service and rehabilitation on the lines.

BOSTON'S GREEN LINE saw the inauguration of service by the new Boeing-built articulated streetcars the morning of Dec 30, 1976. Aboard the first revenue runs were Gov. Michael S. Dukakis, Transportation Secretary Frederick Salvucci and MBTA Chairman Robert R. Kiley. The cars were reported to perform well in the icy, snowy weather. About 25 of the cars are now in Boston, with a scheduled delivery rate of 2 per week for the 175 on order from Philadelphia.

PUBLIC HEARINGS BEFORE the ICC on the proposed discontinuance of service on Chicago's South Shore lines began Jan 3. At the hearings a letter written last Nov 29 by Chicago's late Mayor Daley was read, which said "The South Shore line is a vital part of the commuter rail network of the Chicago region" and noted that more autos would be forced into the central Chicago area by a South Shore shutdown. Congressman-elect Adam Benjamin and State Senator Clifford Arnold both testified the first day on behalf of retaining the service. The ICC must rule on the discontinuance petition by Apr 8, or the railroad can legally close down commuter service. About 6400 passengers use the line daily between Chicago, Gary, Michigan City and South Bend. The railroad said it has been profitable, thanks to its freight service, until 1976, when it lost almost $2 million. Its lucrative coal-hauling operations are reportedly threatened by construction of a controversial nuclear power plant.

TRANSIT BRIEFS: Philadelphia was awarded $240 million in federal funds this month to build a connecting Center City Tunnel between ConRail elevated commuter track and a new ConRail underground station in the downtown area... UMTA granted Cleveland $55.1 million this month to purchase buses, light rail vehicles and 20 rapid transit cars for the airport line...

Mixed Train of Thoughts

AMTRAK'S EXCURSION TRAIN using the 4449 American Freedom Train locomotive from from Sanford FL to Birmingham AL on Jan 14-16 ran as planned. The passenger load was smaller than hoped for--about 218 aboard at the start. RTN's Ken Maylath rode the steam run and we expect to have a complete report next issue. The run was somewhat marred by the news upon arrival in Birmingham of the FLORIDIAN derailment a few miles away. The transcontinental excursion will continue in April when Amtrak moves the train from Birmingham to Portland OR. It will not follow the Union Pacific route that was planned--UP turned down the train because of the engine's weight--but will likely run over Southern Pacific, on the Sunset and Coast routes. SP reportedly stated that it is "more than happy" to accommodate the steam train. While the engine rests in SR's shops in Birmingham, it is very likely that it will be repainted in its original Southern Pacific Daylight colors. More information as soon as plans are finalized..... LAKE SHORE LIMITED, RTN's Train of the Year for 1976, has gotten into the media several times this month--once when Coleman criticized the route (that his own department had selected--see p.9) and once at the head of the New Yorker's "Talk of the Town" Dept (1/17),where a young woman writes a mixed but realistic-sounding review of a ride on the train into New York. Her conclusion: "the next time I go anywhere I want to go by train". Bravo.....

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OUTGOING TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY William Coleman wasn'tthe only person ranting and raving about the cost of rail travel in the media. Your friend and mine Mr. James L. Kerrigan, chief executive of Greyhound Lines, has been at it again. A huge article on the front page of the business section of the Sunday NY Times (Jan 2) was headed: Can anybody run this railroad? Bus lines assail Amtrak as deficit passes $400 million. The paper said that Kerrigan thinks the whole free enterprise system is on trial because the U.S. is trying to balance its transportation system. Earlier, Kerrigan criticized Amtrak for its enormous success in the L.A.-San Diego corridor, claiming that Amtrak had taken riders away from Greyhound. He also criticized California's plan to increase rail service on the Oakland-Sacramento corridor. These comments appeared in a number of newspapers. The L.A. Herald Examiner published prominently on Dec 25, 1976 a letter of rebuttal to Greyhound from Dr. Dan Monaghan, Texas rail supporter. Monaghan said in part: "(the bus companies) sit back and permit the public to build these elaborate and expensive facilities whereupon they occupy them for a nominal user charge. The use of these facilities for such a pittance represents a Christmas tree of unparalleled value and renders criticism of Amtrak subsidies entirely out of place." The Herald Examiner published a later editorial which we haven't seen, but to which Amtrak's Art Lloyd responded by a letter (published Jan 13): "A subsidy of $1 million a day (to Amtrak) does appear large because it is a direct subsidy one can read about from a budget message. However, all passenger transportation in the U.S. is subsidized, directly and indirectly. The cost of building and maintaining highways and streets over which buses and trucks travel is provided by taxes. The cost of a freeway interchange runs $200 million--so Amtrak represents less than two freeway interchanges per year." Other rebuttals came from CalTrans and from State Senator James Mills. Mills said that Greyhound should be cooperating to get people out of automobiles instead of taking a shortsighted view. The serious competition is the automobile, he pointed out. Art Lloyd added, "We don't feel we have taken people out of buses, we've taken them out of cars and we should be working as partners, not against each other. Said Mills, "The big problem with Greyhound is that their stations are unsavory places that people don't want to use".....

* * *

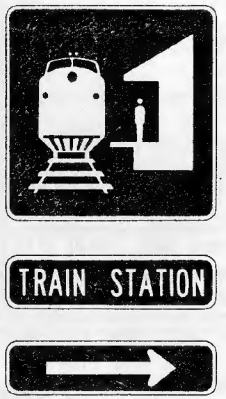
ALL THIS SHOUTING seems to represent a frantic effort by the highway lobby to con- legislators and the public to try to cut back passenger trains in the face of a new, more enlightened DOT chief about to take office. The Seattle Post-Intelligen-

cer this month paid a tribute to incoming Transportation Secretary Brock Adams, relating that at the University of Washington he "walked off with virtually every academic honor the institution could bestow." Former Amtrak president Roger Lewis once remarked early in his reign that "There's more emotion in this trade than any I've been connected with." He was right about transportation being an emotion-laden topic. Perhaps it's because transportation vehicles become such personal things, a fact that can be easily deduced by picking up any automobile magazine. But public officials should restrain their emotions when speaking to the media. People talk about the loss of respect for Washington figures, but is that any wonder when people like a former Cabinet member go around telling the press that train riders are "crazy" and comparing trains to outhouses? We look forward to a more dignified and intelligent approach to our transportation problems under our new transportation leader..... YOU CAN IMAGINE that we didn't like the remarks by Greyhound's president when he criticized plans for increasing rail service Oakland-Sacramento. We've been complaining about that miserable highway 80 for years, and if we have to keep driving it, it will be the death of us. We went to Sacramento on business on Jan 12, using the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, and were delighted by one feature of the train as we left Oakland: the coach attendant made a speech to his coach, introducing himself by name, explaining the location of the diner and lounge, the smoking regulations, and indicating that he would come to each passenger individually and give out a timetable, a pillow if desired, and answer any questions about operating seats, etc. He then proceeded to do just that. Of all the Amtrak trips we've taken, on very few have we found ourselves welcomed aboard in this way, and we hope this is becoming S.O.P. on all Amtrak trains. For our return trip we walked to the rather unsavory Greyhound station to discover that the next bus was not leaving for two hours. So much for Greyhound's efforts to attract riders out of their cars--and this in late afternoon of a busy weekday! Since train 5 was running late, we took it instead. Our coach was very warm, and it felt good after the chilly, foggy outside air (New England readers note: it was all of a cold 40° outside). An enormous number of passengers detrained in Sacramento. There were still a lot going on to Oakland. Everyone was good-humored, tho the train got in 4½ hours late, and tho the diner was closed no one was complaining about missing dinner. There was a good spirit of camaraderie on board, and it was easy to see that one of the major attractions of rail travel is the opportunity to mingle with other people, while still being able to go somewhere on board to be alone if that suits your mood.....

* * *

THREE BARGES BROKE loose on Jan 17 and struck the L&N bridge over the Mobile River east of Mobile AL. The span was said to be 3 inches out of line, but repairs were apparently adequate so that freight trains and the "Peanut Special" could proceed over the span at very low speeds..... THE BLACK HAWK, train 372, on Jan 16 was diverted from its normal ICG route to BN/Milwaukee track from Rockford IL to Davis Junction where it then proceeded on Milw Road rails to Chicago Union Station. The detrour was due to an ICG freight derailment near Genoa earlier that day.....
AN UNKNOWN VANDAL or vandals on the night of Dec 30, 1976, set in motion a 4-Budd car PAT commuter train on the B&O, and it ran 7.6 miles, a 9-minute run, from the yards outside the Glenwood Shop at Pittsburgh to McKeesport, where it crashed into a stationary freight train at Riverton Yard. Quick thinking and action on the part of railroad personnel averted a much larger disaster. There were no injuries, and one car of the empty train was totally destroyed, and a second heavily damaged. The National Transportation Safety Board was investigating the unusual incident, and the Pittsburgh Pr3ss (Jan 16) reported that there were as yet no clues.....
A CASH PRIZE and the Carnegie Hero Fund medal were presented last month to a Belmont CA man, James Livesay, who on Feb 12, 1976 dashed from his car to pull a 5-year old boy from the path of an SP commute train in Redwood City, saving the boy..

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: Amtrak has refuted several items published here last issue: Amtrak said it did not plan to Amfleet the PANAMA LIMITED; it had made a study of the move but decided not to do it. Amfleet cars are now running on the train because of the shortage of equipment in the big freeze. And the New Orleans shops were not to be taken over by Amtrak on Jan 1, tho Amtrak is working on the takeover. Amtrak also said that a cost proposal for Miami-Orlando Amfleet service was never made. The train identified as SAN DIEGAN #772 in the photo on p.15 of the First Dec issue is actually the rear of train 775--train 772 turned to become 775. On p.18 of last issue, timetable form B should be form 8..... A SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA bridge collapsed on Jan 18 and landed on top of a packed commuter train, with possibly 80 fatalities. The train apparently had derailed and hit a bridge support, causing the collapse..... A MOSCOW SUBWAY explosion on Jan 8 killed about 6 people and injured more..... A PASSENGER TRAIN hit a bus in a Mexico City suburb Jan 16, killing 36 and injuring 15; the bus had raced the train to a crossing..... FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION last month approved use of the symbol at



left as an official highway sign to designate a train station..... BIGGEST RAIL MERGER in Mexican history was announced Jan 14; the five major railroads in that country will merge into a single company..... AMTRAK RECEIVES PERMISSION on Jan 24 to discontinue its ticket selling and baggage checking facilities at the Merced CA station on the SAN JOAQUIN route, effective Feb 1. The ICC also gave permission to similarly close the Riverbank station, but Amtrak said it will be kept open, since recent patronage increases seem to justify it..... NEW TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY Adams told the press concerning his planned reorganization of the DOT that it will be easy to reorganize, since it has never been organized at all..... RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR is getting its dome lounge car rebuilt into all lounge space, as we reported earlier. Here's further news of RGZ changes: diner "Silver Banquet" was repainted, recarpeted and got new drapes last May. Combine 1231 is just out of the shops with new paint inside and out, new seat upholstery and vinyl wall covering; exterior paint is orange and silver, without the black stripe under the windows. The former dorm section was removed for baggage space, and rebuilt trucks and new batteries installed. All cars are to get improved electrical systems with solid state components. A car washer in Burnham Yard is to be installed this year. The coaches are getting new rubberized linoleum instead of carpet.....

* * *

THE NIGHT OWL is not using sleepers converted to electric power. Instead the train runs with steam-equipped E60 or GG-1 engines to New Haven and E8s into Boston, with conventional equipment in the front section, and Amfleet cars and an electric power car on the rear. Sleepers 2697, 2622, 2634, and 2642 are assigned to the train.....
AMTRAK ASSUMED CONTROL on Jan 13 of the former Santa Fe passenger car yards at 8th St. in Los Angeles, as well as the Redondo Junction locomotive servicing and repair facility, at a cost of $8.5 million. Amtrak is budgeting $4 million more for improvements. 350 employees there take care of all trains running out of L.A.....
NEW ROUTE BROCHURES for 16 long distance trains have been published by Amtrak. We've seen two--for the LAKE SHORE LTD and EMPIRE BUILDER, both printed in blue & black, and very nicely written, with interesting and useful information.....
AMTRAK HAS SELECTED "Stations of the Year" and Milwaukee won first place, with Salinas CA and St. Albans VT as runners-up nationally and first in their regions...
NEW EXCURSION FARES took effect on many Amtrak trains Jan 10, and on Jan 5 on Northeast Corridor trains..... NEW TRAIN MENUS this year will include a smaller wine bottle, 6.4 ounce "split" in addition to the 12.8-ounce half-bottle.....
STREET TRAFFIC NOISE is a bigger problem than crime, according to a U.S. Census survey which asked 53,800 people to name the biggest urban street problems.....

COOK CONTINENTAL TIMETABLE this month became the Thomas Cook International Timetable. With the Jan 1977 issue a major change in the venerable timetable finds condensed passenger train listings for virtually the entire world included. Only once before has a publisher attempted to produce a world rail timetable. In 1948-9 Imprimerie Chaix of Paris introduced the Indicateur Chaix Mondial. It failed because communications of the time were not equal to the task of keeping it up to date. The Cook publication costs $7.50 to the U.S. or Canada ($9.50 airmail) per monthly issue. The Feb issue will include summer timetables. Available from: Thos. Cook Ltd., Timetable Publ. Office, PO Box 36, Peterborough, England PE3 6SB..... RAIL TRANSPORTATION ARCHIVES has published a unique "Amtrak 1977 Deskbook" with the calendar for one week along with a different Amtrak rail photo appearing on each pair of pages. The slick paper makes one want to avoid writing in it, but save it for continued perusal. See ad in this issue of RTN..... WE EXPECT TO publish the next issue of RTN sooner than two weeks from now to avoid getting too much behind schedule. If your subscription is ending, you need to renew quickly to avoid missing it.....

RTN REQUIREMENTS FOR PHOTO SUBMISSION

We have received so many inquiries about how to send photos for reproduction in RTN that we are publishing the information here:

FOR BLACK & WHITE REPRODUCTION: high quality B&W prints or negatives, high quality color prints or negatives; color slides give mediocre B&W reproduction but are okay in an emergency. FOR COLOR REPRODUCTION: at this time we can use only color slides, preferably high-quality original slides.

All your material is handled carefully and returned unharmed.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"I remember all those people asking why in the world Jimmy would have his campaign headquarters at that old station (in Plains GA), and I just told them we were waiting for a train, a train that would take us to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Well, today, by God, we're going!"

--Maxine Reese, organizer of the "Peanut Special," Jan 19.

"As long as I've been here, the first time that it dawned on me that Jimmy is really going to be president was when that train pulled into town."

--A Plains GA store clerk, Jan 19.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"Besides the Southern Railway's New York-New Orleans Southern Crescent, which is not part of the Amtrak system, two 'crack' Amtrak trains serve us: the Los Angeles-New Orleans Sunset Boulevard and the Chicago-New Orleans Panama Limited."

--New Orleans Times Picayune editorial, Jan 2.

(Some think that boulevard is full of crackpots.)

AMTRAK ENGINES 520 and 501
Want quality original slides, three quarter view, of each unit operating in lead position. Reply to: James Hal Selzer, Jr. PO Box 504, Slidell LA 70459.

THAT'S RIGHT! Now you can take care of all your reservations, tickets, and unlimited travel passes (USA Rail, ConRail, Eurail, BritRail) at the Mid-West rail specialists: HOOSIERAIL TRAVEL, PO Box 1025, Bloomington IN 47401. 812-336-2400.

Hey Paul: Tell us how you feed 400 on Lake Shore Ltd. with a 24 seat diner?

RTN BACK ISSUES: Complete year 1976 (Vol 6), 22 issues $7.00; complete 1975 (Vol 5), 24 issues $7.00, all in one package sent parcel post, postpaid, no tax. Order today from: MESSAGE MEDIA, Dept. RTN, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

Express Ads

RAIL FANS ONLY! It's easy to secure your AMTRAK & CN reservations and tickets (or USA Rail Pass)--from anywhere in the world. Tickets by mail from GREAT WESTERN TOURS, 639 Market St., San Francisco 94105, or call (415) 398-2994.

DINING CAR DISHES, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, Pullman, stationery, rules, metal items from 25 railroads. Long stamped envelope for list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kan. 67213. (Will buy large and small railroad collections.)

RIDE THE ADIRONDACK with Tri-State NRHS. NY (GCT) to Rouses Point NY & Return Feb. 12/13 1977. Rail Fare & Lodging $48; Kids $29. Dome, Diner, Reserved car D&H PAs! RR Slide Show & Party Sat. nite. Tickets/Info: Tom Nemeth, Tri-State NRHS, 210 Perrine Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854. Tel. 201-463-1091.

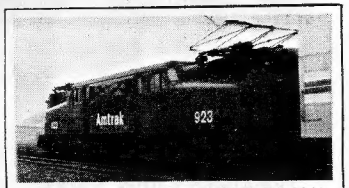
CHIEF WAWATAM a Story of a Hand Bomber, by Frances D. Burgtorf. This carferry has connected Michigan's two peninsulas since 1911, and is still hand-fired! 320 pages loaded with photos, 9" x 12" size. $25.00 postpaid from West Michigan Historical Society, P.O. Box 9073, Grand Rapids, MI 49509.

MEXICO: DELUXE RAIL BARGAIN!! Ride the famous "AZTEC EAGLE" 18 hours USA to 18th century San Miguel Allende. Pullman, Lounge & Dining Cars. Roomette $18. Trips to Mexico City. AZTEC-EAGLE RAILFANS, Apartado 201, San Miguel Allende, Mexico.

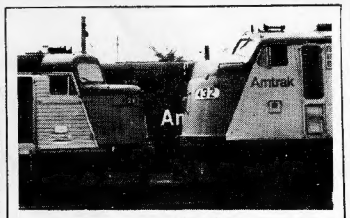
RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads $25 per half-page (maximum size--4x5 inches); $12.50 per quarter page. Write to: Message Media, Ad Dept., Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Thank you!

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS has gotten larger. During 1976 the average copy of RTN was .306 page longer than in 1975. Subscribe now to this growing rail publication. $9/year to Rail Travel News, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Thank you!

Amtrak 1977

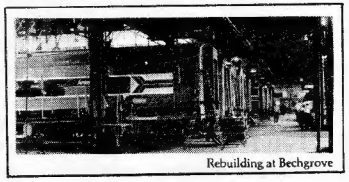


Basic black GG-1 in Philadelphia



Brother act in New Haven

Amtrak tri-color on Metroliner


Rebuilding at Bechgrove

Zebras in New England

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